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true center of the old northwest, a place heretofore held by Michigan or Wisconsin. Bearing in mind that this volume is the tenth of the *Collections* and that previous volumes have made available an astonishing mass of new evidence and an unsuspected wealth of documentary sources for the same region, this claim will not seem so unreasonable as it may at first appear. It is certain that the older conventional view of French Illinois is no longer tenable, but what effect this relatively large body of new matter will have upon the form and content of future history writing in the west is of course purely a matter of conjecture. For the first time in the course of American historical research there has been found west of the Alleghanies a real starting point for the reorganization of the western portion of our national history. The Illinois country is, then, the true focus of the colonial west in the eighteenth century. Quebec, New York, Philadelphia, Virginia, and New Orleans are merely so many radial extremes contributing along entirely divergent lines to the common total. Mr. Alvord has revealed to us the nerve center of the trans-Alleghany west and it remains for us to make connection with these results in the outlying regions immediately or remotely beyond the influence of this beginning point of a new civic life in the wilderness.

O. G. LIBBY

*County archives of the state of Illinois.* By Theodore Calvin Pease, University of Illinois. [Collections of the Illinois state historical library, volume XII, bibliographical series, volume III.] (Springfield: Illinois state historical library, 1915. 730 p.)

This volume is the result of a commendable vision on the part of the trustees of the Illinois state historical library, who deemed it their opportunity to provide a detailed account of the records in the various courthouses of the counties of Illinois and to ascertain, at the same time, if the physical conditions surrounding the county records were such as favored their preservation.

The survey was begun in the autumn of 1911 by Clarence D. Johns, who listed the records of sixty-seven counties in the course of a year. The work was continued in the summer of 1912 by John P. Senning and, subsequently, his work was rechecked by Jacob A. Hofto and Mr. Pease, the latter also making the survey of some ten counties, independently. In this manner, all the one hundred and two counties of the state were reported.

Mr. Pease, the general editor, has written an elaborate introduction for the report, "based partly upon a study of the session laws of the state, partly on conclusions drawn from" his "personal observations in the counties visited, and from notes of the other persons engaged in the survey." The records of each county were given one thorough examination;

and, on the whole, as Mr. Pease reports, "the material as it now stands appears to be trustworthy and accurate." He concludes that the European practice has been of very little service in determining "the conditions or problems of the local records of a middle-western state" and believes "that proper scientific principles must be evolved from an intensive study of the local situation."

The counties are reported in alphabetical order with the exception of Cook county, which, on account of its size, is given first place. The arrangement under each county is by its record offices, namely, county clerk, probate clerk, circuit clerk, and recorder, showing, seriatim, the classes of records in each office. At the head of each county there is given a brief history of its erection and other useful information; similarly, information with respect to the duties, etc., of each officer or office is set forth.

Of very great value to the student of county government in the United States is the general introduction on the "History of county archives in Illinois," which occupies about 135 pages. Here the ramifications of county business are set forth and the operation of county law is seen. Suggestions are also made for certain improvements in the methods of recording and for better physical surroundings and equipment. The legality of loose-leaf records is considered. The problems of concentration and of destroying or discarding certain records are dealt with in particular cases. The historian and the archivist are indebted to Mr. Pease for this introduction, which is not an inconsiderable contribution to the interests of both. Nine pages of bibliography and about ten pages of index top off this useful volume, particularly useful for Illinois, and worthy of emulation by other states.

VICTOR HUGO PALTSITS

*The Illinois whigs before 1846.* By Charles Manfred Thompson, Ph.D., associate in economics, University of Illinois. [University of Illinois studies in the social sciences, vol. iv, no. 1.] (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1915. 165 p. \$95)

This monograph is the first of a series which the author expects to publish on the history of the Illinois whigs. The text proper embraces 123 pages and is divided into five chapters as follows: Genesis of the Illinois whigs, 1809-1834; The emergence of the whig party, 1834-1839; Garrison and Tyler, 1839-1841; Sectionalism and state issues, 1841-1845; The Illinois whigs and national politics, 1841-1845. Each chapter except the last is concluded by a helpful summary. A table of contents precedes chapter i and chapter v is followed by an appendix which lists the members of the Illinois legislature from 1834 to 1846 and shows their political